



Volume 58, Issue 1, November/December 2014

## Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Newsletter

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### **Important Notice for Ordering Agencies Regarding FPDS Reporting Under FSS Contracts**

The Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) is the official system of record for all contracts written by the Federal Government. The information reported within this system is used by Congress and high level leaders within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and all other segments of the Government. As such, the accuracy of information reported within this system is crucial.

At the VA Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Service, we administer 9 different schedules for healthcare related commodities and services. Our contracts are written to allow Federal Government Agencies, along with state and local government agencies under certain programs, to place orders against these contracts (e.g. delivery orders, task orders and Blanket Purchase Agreements). In the FPDS system, our FSS contracts are awarded as an Indefinite Delivery Vehicle (or IDV). Under the initial FSS/IDV action in FPDS, the FSS Service reports the applicable information for the overarching contract.

We are finding that contracting officers (CO) in the field are going into FPDS and using the “correct” button to make changes to the FSS/IDV awarded information. When an ordering activity makes changes to the FSS/IDV action, these actions are permanent and will be effected in all subsequent DO/TOs, BPAs, etc. executed against that FSS/IDV until found and corrected. This causes a significant reporting impact on the FSS Service, the VA, and other agencies that are placing orders against these contracts.

Ultimately, customers who are placing orders against FSS contracts should **never** modify/correct the initial FSS/IDV award action in FPDS. All information from the original contract award must remain unchanged. If a customer does not believe the information reported under the FSS/IDV in FPDS is accurate, they should report their concern to the assigned FSS contract specialist or the [FSS Help Desk](#). Only the CO responsible for the FSS/IDV award has authority to change the awarded contract data fields.

## **Schedule Realignment within Federal Supply Schedule Service**

By now you may already know that in early October, 2014, the National Acquisition Center Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Service's three contracting teams realigned from Alpha, Lambda and Omega to Pharmaceutical/Dental, Medical/Surgical and Services.

To the extent possible, the Service's approximate 1,800 active FSS contracts and 400 incoming offer response packages were evenly distributed among the three teams. For the new model, each contracting team is responsible for three Schedules in lieu of nine. This approach allows for greater specialization and enhances corporate knowledge building to better service our customers, contractors and stakeholders.

Improvement to the FSS Service's ability to execute contracts and modifications is expected over time. We continue to fill positions and train the new employees we are bringing on board as well as our current staff to ensure consistency across the Service. We ask for your continued patience as we adjust to our new schedules, continue to hire new personnel and increase our contract specialists' knowledge base.

### **Our Commitment to You**

One of the FSS Service's core values is communication. We recognized that in the past, we have been remiss in our responsibility to respond to your inquiries timely and keep you informed of resource issues impacting our ability to process offers and other contract administration issues. Our goal going forward is to earn back your trust and faith in our organization; we commit to you that communication will improve.

### **How to identify Your Newly Assigned Contract Specialist**

Please refer back to Issue No 57, Aug/Oct 2014 Newsletter article, *Who is my Contract Specialist*, at <http://www.va.gov/oal/docs/business/nac/vafssEnewsletter201410.pdf> for detailed information. Or, to contact your specific contract specialist we encourage FSS contractors to review the Contract Catalog Search Tool, commonly called the CCST, located at [www.va.gov/NAC](http://www.va.gov/NAC). Select the Search Menu and enter your contract number in the space provided; on the item page click the product code link and you will find the identity of your newly assigned contract specialist (CS) as well as their contact information under the NAC Contracting Officer (CO) header.

The Service has a helpdesk manned by Senior Contract Specialists. You may call the FSS Help Desk at (708) 786-7737 or send an email to [helpdesk.AMMHINFSS@va.gov](mailto:helpdesk.AMMHINFSS@va.gov). If you need further assistance, please contact the Division Chief by schedule responsibility as identified below or you may contact the FSS Service Director, Jane Stroder at (708)786-4957.

### **Medical/Surgical**

The Medical/Surgical team is responsible for the negotiation, award, and administration of contracts under the following Federal Supply Schedules: Medical Equipment and Supplies (FSC 65, Part II, Section A), Patient Mobility Devices (FSC 65, Part II, Section F), and X-ray Equipment and Supplies (FSC 65, Part V, Section A).

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The Medical/Surgical team is responsible for nearly 950 of the 1,800 active FSS contracts. Since the Medical/Surgical team has the greatest number of contracts, this team will be split into two separate divisions. Chief, James L. Booth will head up Medical/Surgical Division A team with thirteen members, including three Senior Contract Specialists when fully staffed.

We are currently in the process of filling the Medical/Surgical Division B Chief position. When fully staffed, this team will have thirteen members including two Senior Contract Specialists.

For questions, comments, and concerns relating to specific, existing 65IIA, 65IIF, & 65V FSS contracts, please make sure to directly contact the assigned contract specialist. Assigned contract specialist information can be found using the steps above in the "[How to identify Your Newly Assigned Contract Specialist](#)".

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the [FSS Help Desk](#), one of our Senior Contract Specialists, or the Division Chief will be more than happy to assist. Our contact information is as follows:

- FSS Help Desk (708) 786-7737, [helpdesk.AMMHINFSS@va.gov](mailto:helpdesk.AMMHINFSS@va.gov)
- Contracting Chief, James Booth (708) 786-5226
- Senior Contract Specialists
  - Nancy Keating (708) 786-5218
  - Monee Robinson (708) 786-5183
  - Leo Washington (708) 786-4940
  - Christopher Bushman (708) 786-4930
  - Aretha Johnson (708) 786-7793

### **Pharmaceutical/Dental**

Pharm/Dental is responsible for the negotiation, award, and administration of contracts under the following Federal Supply Schedules: Drugs, Pharmaceuticals & Hematology Related Products (65IB); Invitro Diagnostics, Reagents, Test Kits, & Test Sets (65VII); and Dental Equipment & Supplies (65IIC).

When fully staffed, Pharm/Dental will have twenty teammates reporting to Division Chief, Gregory L. Madden. Pharm/Dental has five Senior Contract Specialists and one Pharmacist. Three of Pharm/Dental's Senior Contract Specialists serve as Schedule Managers. Ms. Lydia McKay is the Schedule Manager for Schedule 65IB, Ms. Diana Lawal is the Schedule Manager for Schedule 65VII, and Ms. Lynda O'Neill is the Schedule Manager for Schedule 65IIC. Ms. Deborah Zuckswarth will be the Pharm-Dental focal point for issues arising under Public Law 102-585 (PL), Veterans Healthcare Act of 1992.

For questions, comments, and concerns relating to specific, existing 65IB, 65IIC, & 65VII FSS contracts, please make sure to directly contact the assigned contract specialist. Assigned contract specialist information can be found using the steps above in the "[How to identify Your Newly Assigned Contract Specialist](#)".

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to our schedule or PL manager, the [FSS Help Desk](#), or the Division Chief and we will be more than happy to assist. Our contact information is as follows:

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- [FSS Help Desk](#), (708) 786-7737
- Contracting Chief, Gregory Madden (708) 786-4949
- Pharmacist, Eugene Blackwell (708) 786-7751
- Senior Contract Specialists
  - Deborah Zuckswerth (708) 786-5128
  - Curtis Brinson (708) 786-4389
  - Lydia McKay (708) 786-5837
  - Diana Lawal (708) 786-4948
  - Lynda O'Neill (708) 786-4958

### **Services**

The Services Division is responsible for the negotiation, award, and administration of contracts under the following Federal Supply Schedules: Professional and Allied Healthcare Staffing Services (621I), Medical Laboratory Testing and Analysis Services (621II), and Cost-Per-Test (66III).

When fully staffed, Services will have ten teammates reporting to Division Chief, W.R. (Bob) Satterfield, III and two Senior Contract Specialists, Sharon A. Mosher and Linda M. Smith.

For questions, comments, and concerns relating to specific, existing 621I, 621II, & 66III FSS contracts, please make sure to directly contact the assigned contract specialist. Assigned contract specialist information can be found using the steps above in the "[How to identify Your Newly Assigned Contract Specialist](#)".

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the [FSS Help Desk](#), one of our Senior Contract Specialists, or the Division Chief and we will be more than happy to assist. Our contact information is as follows:

- [FSS Help Desk](#) (708) 786-7737
- Contracting Chief Bob Satterfield (708) 786-4955
- Senior Contract Specialists
  - Sharon Mosher TDD(708) 512-7387
  - Linda Smith (708) 786-5194

Please note, in accordance with the contract terms and conditions of your FSS contract, you are required to maintain insurance. Failure to maintain the required insurance may force us to cancel your contract pursuant to the Cancellation clause. All current schedule 621I and 621II contractors are reminded to please forward copies of the Professional Liability Insurance Certificate renewals to the assigned contract specialist.

### **FSS Service and Compliance with Section 508**

In keeping with VA's mission to provide outstanding healthcare services to its Veterans, it is our commitment to fully comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U S C 794(d)), as amended. This Act requires all Federal agencies make their electronics and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities. Organizationally, VA focuses on the key areas dealing with software applications and operating systems; web-based intranet and internet information and systems; and telecommunication products. The goal is to allow users the ability to interact with our website and other communication mediums through computer software and other assistive technologies/devices. To learn more about the law please visit [www.section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov).

For FSS Service our inherent values and commitment to our customers, contractors, stakeholders and employees is evidenced by our continuous improvement to our EIT systems such as our website ([www.FSS.va.gov](http://www.FSS.va.gov)) and documents therein. Our goal in 2015, and thereafter, is to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, our systems are fully accessible by persons with disabilities. We are working on making all documents such as solicitations, request for modification forms, etc. fully compliant with the Act. Not too long ago, we converted all of the official correspondence related to Public Law 102-585, Veterans Healthcare Act (VHCA) into compliant documents. This was a herculean task as most VHCA documents (e.g. Dear Manufacturer Letter) date back 20 years and many were not very readable. As we begin to refresh our solicitations, the exhibits and excel spreadsheets will be uploaded in an accessible form thus removing the need to convert them.

Within the FSS Service we supply our visually impaired employees with computer equipment and software, such as JAWS® (Job Access with Speech), that allows them to navigate and "read" the computer screen. JAWS® is a screen reader program that provides speech and Braille output for computer applications. Screen magnifiers are provided as well to enhance documents and screen images. Printers/scanners are used to create documents in PDF that are readable by programs such as JAWS®.

We recognize achieving full compliance will take time, effort, and patience. Nevertheless, we are determined that everyone will be able to participate in our procurement programs whether as an employee, contractor, customer, stakeholder, or general public interested in how VA manages its fiduciary responsibilities.

### **Schedule Classification Clarity (Patient/Transport Lifts)**

The Medical Equipment and Supplies (65IIA) Schedule incorporates Special Item Number (SIN) A-76 for patient lifts; while the Patient Mobility Devices (65VA) Schedule incorporates SIN F-7 for transport lifts. We often see offers including products under the incorrect schedule.

In order to determine which schedule is the correct fit, it is essential for vendors and government contract specialists to first determine the product to be a medical related item; and then determine where the item best fits. To the latter, where the item best fits is usually contingent upon the primary and predominant use for the product. Increasingly, there is a need for clarity regarding patient lifts versus transport lifts. The 65IIA Schedule provides for general medical related equipment and supply items when no specific schedule has been established. Schedule 65IIA under (SIN A-76) speaks to equipment or devices used to lift patients whether it is in the home or hospital with the intended focus on the patient being lifted.

Schedule 65IIF under (SIN F-7) speaks to transport lifts such as wheelchairs, scooters and the like with the intended focus on the equipment being lifted for transport which may afford the onboarding of the patient.

## **Signature Authority for Offers & Contracts**

Have you updated your firm's delegation for authority to sign your Federal Supply Schedule offer or contract lately? All contract modifications require an authorized signature, and FSS contract specialists verify this signature prior to executing all contract actions in order to protect all parties. It is always a good idea to have several personnel designated with signature authority so that contractual actions can be processed in a timely manner.

To provide an update of this designation to your FSS contract, please go to <http://www.va.gov/oal/business/fss/rfmProcess.asp> on the FSS website, wherein the modification process is outlined in detail.

To obtain the Signature Authority document, please go to [http://www.va.gov/oal/docs/business/nac/FssRfmPackage\\_OtherFormsSignatoryAuthority.pdf](http://www.va.gov/oal/docs/business/nac/FssRfmPackage_OtherFormsSignatoryAuthority.pdf).

To obtain a Request for Modification (RFM) package, please go to <http://www.va.gov/oal/business/fss/modForms.asp> (be sure to select the correct FSS Schedule: Pharmaceutical, Commodity or Service).

And of course, if you need additional assistance please call the FSS Helpdesk at (708)786-7737 or email us at [helpdesk.AMMHINFSS@va.gov](mailto:helpdesk.AMMHINFSS@va.gov)